

May 9 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

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Dr. Krosby graduated from the University

of Minnesota, receiving a bachelor of arts degree and a master of arts degree, and the London School of Economics, receiving a doctoral degree in 1979. She was born August 3, 1948, in New York, NY. She is married, has five children, and resides in Washington, DC.

Remarks Upon Receiving an Honorary Degree From Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey

May 10, 1991

Thank you all very much. This is indeed for me an honor. And the last time, save one, that I was on this campus, I was not treated quite so hospitably. *[Laughter]* It was out at the baseball diamond, I think in 1948. Crowded along the first baseline—it was very hostile, the way it worked in Princeton—were a bunch of hyperventilating, celebrating alumni.

And I remember standing there at first base, and a gigantic tiger—I think his name was Neil Zundel—came to the plate. He lofted an easy fly towards Yale's first baseman, me. And as I reached for the ball, the guy just sheer bowled me over—*[laughter]*—to the cheers of the Princeton alumni. *[Laughter]*

I was hurt, my pride was hurt. But P.S., Yale won the ball game. *[Laughter]*

So, how lovely today it is, though. And I view this degree as a very high honor from an institution for which I have unlimited respect. It is a great privilege for Barbara and me to be up with you today. I hear the rites of spring over my shoulder out there, but it wouldn't be normal in my job if we didn't hear those rites chanting out there. But I hope I bring peace and tranquility to your campus because you bring great joy to our heart, my formerly fibrillating heart.

Thank you very much.

Note: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. in the faculty room of Nassau Hall. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at Dedication Ceremony of the Social Sciences Complex at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey

May 10, 1991

Thank you all very much. Thank you. Please be seated. It's a great pleasure to be here. President Shapiro, your words were so kind that my heart almost went back into fibrillation. *[Laughter]* I salute you, sir, and I thank you for the honor bestowed on me.

To Governor Florio; and to the Members of the United States Congress that are here today; to Mrs. Shapiro, and the board of trustees; to Chairman Henderson; Dean Williamson; Associate Dean Morrow. And

I'd also like to salute Princeton's former Presidents Goheen and Bowen. And I'm delighted to help dedicate this impressive complex.

Though I must say that I'm glad that this is May and not the first snowfall. I don't think Barbara would let me take place in your special brand of Olympics. *[Laughter]*

Seriously, I'm honored to receive an honorary degree from Princeton. Imagine: a son of Yale getting a Princeton degree.

“Son of Yale”—you can snicker, but you ought to hear what they call me in Washington. [Laughter]

Governor Florio’s comments brought back JFK’s words when he said, “How lucky I was to have a Princeton degree.” And I agree with him. You remember what JFK said, and I’ll paraphrase it—I have the best of all worlds: a Princeton degree and a Yale education. [Laughter] I knew that would not thrill the band, but you did a great job on “Hail To The Chief.” Thank you. [Laughter]

Well, Princeton is a great place. You know, Washington said, “No college has turned out better scholars or more estimable characters.” That includes, of course, our last two Secretaries of State. Both have been outstanding public servants. Both love this university. But only one has a tattoo to prove it. [Laughter]

I’ll always remember the time that I saw the globe inside the Woodrow Wilson School lobby. Anywhere you touch it, you set off vibrations across the rest of its surface. I can’t think of a more appropriate symbol for this nation’s role in the world. When we act, we do set off tremors across the globe. And Princeton is blessed with real expertise in the study of the Presidency.

And I salute Professor Fred Greenstein, and it is with some temerity, therefore, that I give this talk that will touch on the Presidency.

I’d like to talk today about an American achievement that has inspired men and women worldwide, most recently, in Eastern Europe. I’m speaking of our Constitution. In the interest of brevity, I will focus on the roles of the two branches of Government in which I have had the honor to serve, the legislative—Congress—and the executive departments.

Consider the President’s role. Thomas Jefferson once noted that a President commands a view of the whole ground, while Congress necessarily adopts the views of its constituents. The President and Vice President are the only officials elected to serve the entire Nation. It is the President who is responsible for guiding and directing the Nation’s foreign policy. The executive branch alone may conduct international negotiations, appoint ambassadors, and con-

duct foreign policy. Our founders noted the necessity of performing this duty with “secrecy and dispatch,” when necessary. The President also serves as Commander in Chief of our Armed Forces, as it was my role to do in the Persian Gulf.

This does not mean that the Executive may conduct foreign business in a vacuum. I have a great respect for Congress, and I prefer to work cooperatively with it wherever possible. Though I felt after studying the question that I had the inherent power to commit our forces to battle after the U.N. resolution, I solicited congressional support before committing our forces to the Gulf war. So, while a President bears special foreign policy obligations, those obligations do not imply any liberty to keep Congress unnecessarily in the dark.

The President’s view of the whole ground includes a second responsibility: shaping the Nation’s domestic agenda. Presidents do this by submitting annual budgets to Congress, along with a comprehensive legislative program.

We’ve had our share of legislative successes. They include a budget agreement that reduces our borrowing requirements by nearly \$500 billion over the next 5 years, a Clean Air Act that invokes the power of the marketplace to help America breathe cleaner air, an Americans with Disabilities Act—landmark civil rights legislation that enhances the dignity of those with disabilities, a child care bill that puts more power and choice in the hands of parents when it comes to the care of their own children.

But Presidents may encourage change through means other than legislation. Our Points of Light campaign encourages the traditional American virtue of private service. Our America 2000 education strategy, which has been well-received across the land, involves dramatic reforms that don’t make dramatic new claims on taxpayers’ earnings. It draws on people’s common frustration with an educational system that simply must do better. It encourages people to use their common sense and good old American ingenuity in creating better, revolutionary new schools. It won’t help build a new office building in Washington, but it

very well may inspire people to build a better future for themselves and their children, school by school, community by community.

Elsewhere, we've proposed turning programs back to States and localities. This enables people to craft the most appropriate solution for the problems that they confront in this diverse land of ours.

The point is simple: You don't always need to propose a new program to pursue a national goal. Often a President can lead by encouraging the values of service, by helping foster a national spirit of commitment and responsibility.

For too long, pundits and special interests have equated vision with bureaucracy. I hope one of the hallmarks of our administration will be its ability to encourage not just good government but also a good society, one that draws upon and encourages the best instincts and ambitions and values of the American people.

The common thread of commitment, individual commitment, runs through all successful efforts to solve our most intractable problems. The individual who cares, who is determined to change things for the better, can make a difference. And all of us Americans ought to dedicate ourselves to making a difference.

While a President must take on today's problems and tomorrow's challenges, he also has an obligation to "preserve, protect, and defend" a 200-year-old system of constitutional government. The most common challenge to Presidential powers comes from a predictable source, represented here by several able Members of the United States Congress.

Although our founders never envisioned a Congress that would churn out hundreds of thousands of pages worth of reports and hearings and documents and laws every year, they did understand that legislators would try to accumulate power. James Madison, your son—Princeton's son—warned that "The legislative department is everywhere extending the sphere of its activity, and drawing all power into its impetuous vortex." That was Mr. Madison speaking, not President Bush speaking.

Sometimes this sort of competition falls entirely within the bounds of the Constitution. But consider the unnecessary requests

and requirements that can waste the time and energy of the Executive.

Thirty years ago, we devoted nearly 9.5 percent of our gross national product to defense expenditures. And today, defense spending accounts for only 5.3 percent of our GNP. But congressional oversight has grown exponentially. One hundred and seven committees and subcommittees—107—oversee defense programs and spending. For fiscal year 1989, the Pentagon devoted 500 man-years and over \$50 million just to write reports responding to congressional queries on such items as plans for manning tugboats and accounting for the number of bands.

Defense staff has to respond yearly to more than 750,000 congressional staff inquiries. Other executive agencies exhaust their time and energy, often giving identical testimony to a whole battery of subcommittees and committees.

Oversight, when properly exercised, helps keep the Executive accountable. But when it proliferates wildly, it can confuse the public and make it more difficult for Congress and the President to do their jobs properly.

The Chief Executive also preserves, protects, and defends the Constitution through the use of the veto power. Six times in my Presidency, I have vetoed bills that would have weakened Presidential powers. In one case, for instance, Congress wanted to make the President disclose a wide variety of sensitive diplomatic contacts and discussions—as well as private discussions with the executive branch—and would have threatened to impose criminal sanctions on a wide range of normal diplomatic activities. I noted in my veto message that: "The result would be a dangerous timidity and disarray in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. Such a result is wholly contrary to the allocation of powers under the Constitution."

Elsewhere, Congress has also taken aggressive action against specific Presidential powers, including the power to appoint or remove employees who serve at the President's pleasure. It sometimes tries to manage executive branch—micromanage the executive branch—by writing too-spe-

cific directions for carrying out a particular law. And when this happens, the President has a constitutional obligation to protect his Office and to veto the legislation. In addition, on many occasions during my Presidency, I have stated that statutory provisions that violate the Constitution have no binding legal force.

But there's another, often overlooked side of the veto power. Often vetoes encourage the Legislature to reconsider its actions. When I vetoed a minimum wage bill—and it wasn't an easy thing to do—I sought to persuade Congress that a slightly lower rate would best serve the public interest. And in time Congress agreed. And when Congress bundles up a series of unrelated measures and calls it a single bill, it frustrates the President's constitutional role in resisting the influence of special interests. It is often impractical to veto a tremendous bill, a major bill, especially an appropriations bill because of unrelated riders that would never stand a chance on their own.

Bills of this sort can pose as much of a threat to Congress as to the President. And it has become an annual sport for reporters to pull peculiarities out of the vast spending bills, such as a Federal grant to study cow belches, or a Lawrence Welk Museum, and ask Congress to defend them. Quite often because of the added riders and the complexity of the whole bill, Members don't even know what they've voted for. They're so complex; things are added in the dark of the night.

I have sought, and will continue to seek, a line-item veto to prevent such embarrassments and protect the American people from injudicious appropriation. Right now 43 Governors have such a power. It works. The President ought to have that power, too. Some believe that I already have that power under the Constitution.

In closing, let me try to summarize my view of the Presidency. Presidents define themselves through their exercise of Presidential power. They must use their special

authority to serve the whole Nation in matters of foreign and domestic policy. They must set a tone for governance, at once leading the people, yet following their desires. They must preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution. And they must encourage deliberative behavior on the part of Congress.

But the real power of the Presidency lies in a President's ability to frame, through action, through example, through encouragement, what we as a nation must do, what is required of communities and institutions, large and small, in schools and factories and the hundreds of daily acts of individuals.

The great joy and challenge of the Office I occupy—and believe me, I am honored every single day I walk into that Oval Office by the privilege of being President—the great joy is that the President serves not just as the unitary Executive but hopefully as a unifying Executive.

As President, I feel honor-bound to strengthen the marvelous system of government bequeathed to us so that we may remain the freest, the most decent, the most prosperous, caring nation in the history of the world.

Thank you, and may God bless each and every one of you. And thank you for the honor you've bestowed on me.

Note: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Harold Shapiro, president of the university, and his wife, Vivian; Gov. James Florio of New Jersey; James Henderson, chairman of the executive committee of the board of directors of the university; Joseph Williamson, dean of the chapel; Sue Anne Steffey Morrow, associate dean of the chapel; Robert F. Goheen and William G. Bowen, former presidents of the university; Secretary of State James A. Baker III; former Secretary of State George P. Shultz; and Fred I. Greenstein, professor of politics and director of the research program in leadership studies. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.